

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Governor Terry E. Branstad ★ Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, September 3, 2013
Contact: Tim Albrecht (515) 281-5211

Gov. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Reynolds announce
Connect Every Iowan broadband Initiative

STEM Committee charged with developing legislative recommendations, strategic plan

(DES MOINES) – Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds today unveiled their new “Connect Every Iowan” initiative to increase the access, adoption, and use of broadband technology.

The governor and Lt. governor have asked the existing STEM Advisory Council’s Broadband Committee to develop legislative recommendations to encourage broadband build-out throughout Iowa, particularly in unserved or underserved areas. The committee’s first meeting will be Sept. 10, from 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., at the ICN Conference Room on the 2nd floor of the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Its recommendations are expected to be delivered by December 1, 2013.

The committee has also been asked to develop a long-term strategic plan for broadband by January 1, 2015, and to identify and pursue any possible federal funding opportunities or public private partnerships.

“We want to make Iowa the most connected state in the Midwest,” said Branstad.

Currently Iowa ranks 11th out of 12 Midwestern states on the TechNet State Broadband Index, behind neighboring states such as Nebraska, Minnesota, Missouri and Illinois. The index is compiled from three measures: The household adoption rate of broadband, network speeds of available broadband infrastructure, and the amount of jobs in information and communication technology industries that benefit from broadband technology.

“I’m confident Iowans all across the state will benefit from the initiative – most importantly, more broadband access means more jobs for Iowans,” said Branstad.

According to a study conducted by the Brookings Institute, for every one percentage point increase in broadband technology penetration into a state, employment is projected to increase by 0.2 to 0.3 percent per year.

“We need to make sure rural Iowa has the tools to stay connected, because connectivity is the great equalizer,” said Reynolds. “Connectivity will allow us to preserve rural Iowa, while keeping us competitive with other states for economic development projects. We believe every Iowan – from

students, to small business owners, to rural health care providers, to public safety officers – can benefit from this initiative to increase the access, adoption, and use of broadband technology.”

The STEM Advisory Council’s Broadband Committee will be co-chaired by John Carver, Superintendent of Howard-Winneshiek Community School District, and Robert von Wolfradt, the State Chief Information Officer. Administrative support and technical expertise will be provided by Amy Kuhlers of Connect Iowa, a non-profit organization which is working in partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority to ensure that all can experience the benefits of broadband.

Members of the STEM Advisory Council’s Broadband Committee:

Co-Chair John Carver, Superintendent, Howard-Winneshiek Community School District

Co-Chair Robert von Wolfradt, Chief Information Officer, State of Iowa

Amy Kuhlers, Program Manager, Connect Iowa

Robert Denson, President, Des Moines Area Community College

Dave Duncan, President, Iowa Telecommunication Association

Philip Groner, Iowa Communication Network

Karl Hehr, Director of Technology Services, Ames Community Schools District

Galen Howsare, Chief Financial Officer, Iowa Association of School Boards

Karen Randall, Keystone Area Education Association

Michael Sadler, Assistant VP for Public Policy & Government Relations

Larry Siegel, Iowa School Finance and Information System Services

Jeff Weld, Executive Director, Governor’s STEM Advisory Council

Josh Byrnes, State Representative, District 14

For more information:

<http://Governor.Iowa.Gov/Connect>

Link to the TechNet State Broadband Index:

http://www.technet.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/TechNet_StateBroadband3a.pdf

About Connect Iowa:

www.connectiowa.org

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